

Additional/Revised Information

Agenda Item #	9
Meeting Date	March 14, 2005
Prepared By	Jessie Carpenter Deputy Clerk
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Discussion of Administrative Regulations Concerning Control of Noxious Growths and Undesirable Trees (Takoma Park Code Chapter 12: Trees and Vegetation)
Additional/ Revised Information	Catherine Tunis, Chair of the Committee on the Environment, has submitted comments on the proposed administrative regulations. Her comments are attached.
Policy	The City encourages residents and other stakeholders to comment on proposed regulations.
Fiscal Impact	None.
Attachments	Comments from the Committee on the Environment regarding proposed Administrative Regulations Concerning Control of Noxious Growths and Undesirable Trees (Takoma Park Code Chapter 12: Trees and Vegetation)
Recommendation	Staff recommends that the City Council review the comments prior to discussion of the proposed regulations.
Special Consideration	

March 11, 2005

Note to City Council, Barbara Mathews, and Brett Linkletter

Subject: Comments on revisions to the Tree Ordinance

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions to the Tree Ordinance covering allergenic plants and overgrowth of invasive plant species, and facilitating the removal and replacement of undesirable trees. We appreciate the interest that the City government is showing in both of these problems. We have some thoughts on the proposed revisions and hope you find them useful.

We believe that expediting the tree permitting process as proposed to allow for removal and replacement of the listed trees is useful, and we think most of the species listed are sensible, especially Tree of Heaven and Bradford Pear. The Committee has more concern about adding native trees to this list, particularly because there will be no right of citizen appeal to their removal. That said, we are sure you understand that such a list can be controversial, and we suspect some citizens may not appreciate red mulberry (*Morus rubra*) or Box elder (*Acer negundo*) being on the list because they are natives. However, some may want the list to contain more trees, such as empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*), Autumn and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus* spp.), or Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). Regarding the consideration of location in the decision to allow removal of an undesirable species, we suggest that the City consider not just proximity to hardscape or litter, but limit removals under this section to trees that are causing significant damage to property. We would also like to point out that in our experience, the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) will generally grow back after being cut down, consequently many experts recommend the cut trunk be treated promptly with the herbicide triclopyr (glyphosate is not considered effective). Therefore, Brett, you may wish to provide this advice when dealing with removal of this tree.

We much appreciate the City's desire to provide information to citizens on how to control allergenic plants such as poison ivy, or invasive plants such as bamboo. However, we would like to suggest a different approach than that offered in the City's proposal for providing guidance on how to specifically control the problem plants. The University of Maryland through its Cooperative Extension service produces high quality advice through on-line fact sheets on the weeds subject to the Tree Ordinance. For example, there are separate sheets on "Bamboo", "Poison Ivy", and "Invasive Plant Control in Maryland" (which covers multiflora rose, honeysuckle, and wisteria among others). These two to four page documents give detailed and specific control guidance from experts, as well as illustrations and safety precautions. We recommend that the discussions on plant control in the Tree Ordinance be kept to a bare minimum and instead offer affected parties a convenient source of information such as the specific University of Maryland website and/or the promise that the Arborist will provide such advice through up-to-date printed sheets upon request.

We believe that referring citizens to fact sheets, and dropping specific control recommendations from the Ordinance, will benefit the City in that the information can be updated more easily, plus be much more detailed and specific than can be conveniently provided in the Ordinance. One idea for supplementing the fact sheets from the Extension service and personalizing them for Takoma Park, is to write article(s) for publication in the Newsletter on how to comply with the ordinance. We liked the excellent article by you, Brett, on the desirability of large trees. In plain English, it effectively described the problem and how we should deal with it. If, for example, a similar article were to be written on bamboo, it might cover when and why bamboo is a problem, and what to do about it. Such articles could be saved on the website for future reference.

Again, thank you for seeking our input. We look forward to working with you on this and other environmental issues.

The Takoma Park Committee on the Environment